

# Rhode Island | Race to the Top

## EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT

### Informational Brief

#### Data Governance

##### Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Goal

Rhode Island is currently in the process of designing and building an early learning data system that will leverage RIDE's existing Longitudinal Data System linked to the Department of Health's KidsNet Database along with data from other key state agency systems. RI has recognized that improved access to data on young children's development, learning, and participation in early learning programs will help the State ensure children most at risk for poor outcomes have priority access to high quality programs. Additionally, the State will be better able to channel resources to make improvements in programs quality and in the workforce.

In the Race to the Top application, one of the four key goals is to establish a governance structure and data oversight process for the state.

*"Create a governance structure and data-oversight process that ensures shared planning, access, and use of the Early Learning Data System across State departments, by early learning intermediary organizations, and by early learning programs."*

##### Research and Rationale

As part of the state's early learning data system, there needs to be effective data governance in place to ensure the information remains accurate, timely and is being used appropriately. Governance is essential to ensure shared data access and use across state agencies by early learning intermediary organizations and that early learning programs comply with federal, state, and local data privacy laws. Since this system will incorporate data from multiple state agencies and sources, governance will span across multiple departments. Data ownership is tied to the originating system or process and under the control of each agency or vendor who is responsible to ensure its' integrity and security.

##### Rhode Island's Approach

The Data Core Team has decided to utilize the RTT - ELC Technical Assistance program to provide guidance in implementing our Data Governance process for our Early Learning Data System.

Several meetings with Missy Cochenour of AEM have been held to discuss our Technical Assistance (TA) request and outline requirements. Ms. Cochenour has developed a high level plan detailing the tasks necessary to support our TA goal. The first step is to conduct a conference call with the TA group to establish the appropriate resources to include in the process. The second step is to schedule several facilitated sessions with key project stakeholders conducted by TA staff. We envision having the TA staff on site for two days so members of our Data Systems Core Team, existing management staff, and our existing Data Governance Board can all participate. Additional state agency staff, as identified during our conference calls, would also be included. The third step is to actually conduct the facilitated sessions. During these facilitated sessions, the TA staff is expected to show us examples of how other states have created their data governance models and to assist us in understanding how best to build ours. Key questions to be addressed are:

- Who should be represented?
- What activities does the governance board need to consider?
- What has worked well in other states and what are the pitfalls?
- What are the FERPA and HIPAA related rules and regulations that we need to consider and how have these changed since inception?
- What are other states doing with the information contained in their early learning data systems?
- What controls should be put in place to ensure we are complying with all regulations?
- What process should be implemented to review and approve requests for information?

Once those sessions are completed, a committee will be formed to work with the TA provider to create the Data Governance process. The expectation is that the initial data governance framework will take 90 to 120 days to complete with modifications as needed.

#### Emerging considerations and questions from the field regarding data governance

There are many people - providers, state agencies, key stakeholders and organizations – who have expressed an interest in using the data being built into the data system. It is extremely important to establish a data governance process to ensure we leverage the information appropriately. Rhode Island's goals, as defined in our Race to the Top application, are to use this information to help answer key policy questions by analyzing the data in an aggregated, de-identified manner. By building a system containing such vital information, state agencies will have the ability to review data at a more detailed level in support of improving the overall quality of our early learning system.

#### Decision-making process and opportunities to provide input/feedback

The data governance process that is defined as a result of these sessions will be reviewed by representatives from all participating state agencies. The Data System Core team will be part of the TA

sessions and provide feedback and direction as we develop the governance process. It is our expectation that, as a part of our model, we will create a data governance board or committee with representation from all necessary stakeholders. The Data System Sub-Committee will be provided with the governance process and asked for input. The Early Learning Council will be engaged and kept informed throughout the process of building and refining our new data governance model.

*For more information about the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, Data Governance, please contact Michael Bosworth at [Michael.Bosworth@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Michael.Bosworth@ride.ri.gov) or (401) 222-8988*